Victories in Nevada, Indiana, New York, and California

Pan Am Employees Vote OEIU At Nev. Test Station

Pan American clerical employees at the Nuclear Rocket Development Station in Nevada voted decisively in an NLRB-conducted election for representation by OEIU Local 400. The unit of 105 employees cast 47 votes for the OEIU, thereby defeating the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, which tallied 35 ballots. Only three employees in the total unit voted "no union." Two challenged ballots, which cannot affect the decision, were uncouned.

Campaign leaders International Representative Joe McGee and Local 400 President Gordon Stanton attributed the victory to an intelligent campaign waged primarily through mailed material and leaflet distribution.

Pan American World Airways operates the maintenance and support services of the station under contract with the Atomic Energy Commission.

Although the greater majority of the Pan Am unit (79 employees) are employed at the Nuclear Research Development Site, Pan Am employees in the Data Processing Department utilize computer services at a Las Vegas bank 26 miles east of the site.

Local 400 also represents 400 clerical employees of the Reynolds Electrical and Engineering Co., located at the nearby Mercury Test Site. Many of the Pan American employees who voted in this election were former members of the OEIU employed by Reynolds Electrical and Engineering Co. but were transferred to Pan American to participate in sub-contracted work.

44 Employees of Urban Renewal Corp. Gain Representation by Local 153

Local 153 recently won bargaining rights for 44 office clerical, maintenance clerical, and field employees of the City Urban Renewal Management Corporation located in New York City.

The company attempted to avoid unionization by claiming it was a non-profit quasi-governmental organization exempt from state law. A meeting was held at the State Labor Relations Board at which officials of Local 153 stressed the fact that the union represented a majority of employees and that the issue should be resolved either on the basis of a cross-check of the cards against the employer's payroll records or through an election conducted under the direction of the New York State Labor Relations Board.

However, shortly after the meeting the Mayor's office inter-viewed through Morris Tarshis, chief city labor mediator. Mr. Tarshis informed the local union that the City Urban Renewal Management Corporation had agreed to meet with business representa-tive Drucker at the offices of Philip J. Rufo, general counsel of the New York City Department of Labor.

This meeting, arranged by Mayor Wagner's top mediator, Mor-ris Tarshis, led to the agreement which resulted in the much-needed and desired organization of the City Urban Renewal Management Corporation's employees into Local 153. After a good deal of dis-cussion, the company agreed that it would recognize Local 153 as the collective-bargaining agent if a check of the cards signed by the employees designating Local 153 as bargaining agent showed that a majority of the people had signed. The card check was conducted by Philip J. Rufo, general counsel of New York City's Department of Labor, and a majority was determined.

The campaign was headed by Local 153 business representative Meyer Drucker, with the able assistance of organizers Steve Dono-hoe and Joseph Tsoody.

Pacific Northwest Educational Conference

The Pacific Northwest Educational Conference met at Portland, Oregon.
MacMillan, Bloedel Strike

As this is written, OEIU Local 15 in Vancouver, B.C., is in the seventh week of a strike against MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Ltd. at Port Alberni. The strike was called on May 19th because of the company’s union-busting tactics.

The company has publicly stated that it is opposed to the unionization of office workers. It unilaterally granted individual increases to its office workers through the medium of sealed envelopes prior to the strike vote in order to persuade them against the need for collective bargaining and strike action. Despite the fact that the company has a union shop agreement with every other union on the premises, it insisted on an open shop agreement with the OEIU.

In addition, a Columbia association of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress have jointly supported the OEIU strike. The Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers Union, the United Papermakers and Paper Workers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the International Woodworkers of America have respected the picket lines of the OEIU at Port Alberni, at the company’s pulp mill, two saw mills and its plywood division; 4,300 workers have yielded themselves together as one in order to fight for a trade union principle.

This example of trade union unity was to be followed by unions of the AFL-CIO and CLC in other parts of the United States and Canada, all workers of both countries could be organized and thus would enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining.

Strikes Less Costly Than Coffee Breaks

The newspapers give much space to threatened strikes and disputes which erupt into strikes. If we were to believe the editorials of the conservative press, we might get the impression that our nation is seriously threatened because of labor disputes.

The reverse is true, however. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service recently made public a report which revealed that we are in one of the most peaceful labor-management relations eras since World War II, and strikes are costing far less in working time than coffee breaks.

William Simkin, director of the agency, said that in 1963 labor disputes on the average involved only 15 workers for every 10,000 workers on the job. He called it “extremely low.”

He also reported that in 1964 the picture looked even brighter—with an average of only 10 men idle due to labor disputes for every 10,000 at work.

Good Government

A number of critics of social progress who would like to see our nation returned to the “good old days” received a stinging rebuke from President Lyndon B. Johnson recently. Johnson quoted Thomas Jefferson as having said, “The care of human life and happiness is the first and only legitimate object of good government.”

President Johnson asked these questions:

“Does government subtract our freedom by bringing electricity to the farm—by controlling floods—or by ending bank failures?”

“Is freedom lessened by efforts to abate pollution in our streams—by efforts to end competition in the workplace?”

“Is freedom diminished by banning the sale of harmful drugs—by providing school lunches for our children—by preserving our wildernesses—or by improving the safety of our highways?”

“Is freedom betrayed when in 1964 we redeem in full the pledge made a century ago by the Emancipation Proclamation?”

We might add another question to those of President Johnson’s: “Is freedom diminished if our government were to adopt a medicare program designed to provide health and hospitalization benefits through the social security system for those over 65?”

Subscription Price $1 a Year

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Royal Health Group Offers New Care Plan

Ottawa, Ont.—A Royal Commission on Health Services, after three years of study, has proposed a comprehensive, government-financed plan that promptly won the tentative endorsement of the Canadian Labour Congress.

The commission’s report, which ran to 914 pages, was the first of three planned on the subject. Its proposal would cover all hospital, doctor and drug bills; free dental and optical care for children up to 18; fluoridation of all community water supplies; special measures to deal with drug addiction, alcoholism and mental illness; a prosthetics program and insurance to meet the cost of outpatient services.

It would protect all Canadians regardless of age, residence, or ability to pay.

“While it has been impossible for us to make a detailed study of the initial report” commented CLC Secretary-Treasurer Donald MacDonald, “it is apparent that the recommendations are of a nature that warrant the support of our organization. We desire to commend the considerable effort to the preparation and presentation of a brief to the commission, and we naturally pleased to find the opinion of the commissioners was in a number of instances in agreement with ours.

“There will undoubtedly be some opinions of the commission on which we will have reservations, but we will refrain from making any criticism until we have had an opportunity of studying the report in detail.” The commission noted that the provincial governmentsadminister the proposed program and split its cost with the federal government. It listed a number of possible ways of financing it, including provincial lotteries.

The commission pointed out that Canadians spend about 6 per cent of gross national product on health care, including capital expenditures, medicines and medical care. The cost to most western nations, it added, runs between 4.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent.

It estimated that by 1971 the cost of the present system “with all of its limitations and inadequacies,” would be about $17.8 billion per person, or $4.015 billion annually. The commission said the program would boost the cost by about $20 per person, or $446 million more. Canada can afford it, it said.

The commission noted a shortage of personnel to make its program work and recommended that training and hospital construction be stepped up sharply, with a continuing government assistance to doctors in training. It foresaw a need for 7,100 more physicians, 2,150

Automated Research

Ontario will join Quebec, Nova Scotia and the federal government in sharing the costs of a research program on automation and social change. Under the arrangements, officials of the four governments will survey representative sections of industry and commerce and review programs by public and private agencies to ease adjustment to dislocation stemming from automation and rapid technological change.

If initial studies establish the need for a semi-autonomous national or provincial foundation on automation and employment, Ontario will be prepared to give the survey the go-ahead.

William Lowe, vice-president of the OEIU Employees International Union, announced the settlement of the MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Ltd. strike as a result of proposals made by The Honourable W. A. C. Bennett, Premier of British Columbia, which were accepted by both management and the union. The main stumbling block—salaries and union security—was resolved.

Employees will receive a 10.9 per cent increase in salaries, and a Board of Arbitration will hand out final step payment recommendations with respect to additional wage increases. A joint study committee will also make recommendations. Union security will be maintained by membership, the Rand formula, a check-off of dues, and a guarantee that the bargaining unit majority will remain intact. The work week has been reduced to 37½ hours for all employees.

President Lowe hailed the cooperation of the Canadian Labour Congress, the British Columbia Federation of Labour, the International Woodworkers of America, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Paper, Pulp and Sulphite Workers, the International Longshoremen’s Union. He paid particular homage to President Hall and The Honourable L. N. Peterson, Minister of Labour.

The British Columbia Federation of Labour, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers Union, the United Papermakers and Paper Workers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the United Brotherhood of America are all standing firm with members of OEIU Local 15 employed at MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Ltd. in their fight to obtain a fair and equitable collective bargaining contract. The unity of 4,300 workers determined to assist 61 office employees is a classic example of trade union solidarity. Practically everyone in British Columbia is acquainted with the facts as this strike, which makes labor history, is front page news in British Columbia newspapers.

The attitude of the employer is a thorough to the view that trust companies in the United States and Canada fought the legitimate efforts of their workers to organize. It is inexcusable in the year 1964 that the MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Company has not only attempted to prevent the unionization of their office staff but publicly stated that white collar workers should not be organized.

During the course of the initial organizational campaign, representatives of the employer met collectively and individually with office employees and attempted to dissuade them from collective bargaining. As usual, the employer stated that his door was always open and he would be pleased if they would come into his office and talk about matters concerning hours, wages, and working conditions.

The employees—who had the International Woodworkers of America as their representative—suggested that they be invited to the union offices and would settle the invitation came after the union initiated an organizational campaign felt that “the employer was inviting them into the parlor,” but the invitation came too late and under the wrong circumstances.

A government-sponsored secret ballot election was held for the purpose of determining the wishes of the majority of the office employees of MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Ltd. It was held under the direction of the Office Employees International Union.

The result was overwhelmingly in favor of the union and, as a result, a certification of bargaining authority was granted. The voters list was signed and certified by the employer. There were 63 names on the list.

After the union was successful, the employer then stated that 11 people who voted were not properly in the bargaining unit because they were either members of management or confidential.

In effect, therefore, the employer wanted these 11 people to vote; but when the decision was in favor of the union, he then wanted them eliminated from the appropriate collective bargaining unit.

The union and the employer negotiated for approximately three months. During this period, the employer did not agree to a single collective bargaining clause presented by the union, including a standard clause pertaining to the use of bulletin boards. The employer did not offer the union as much as one cent in way of wage increases.

When the employees decided to vote by secret ballot for strike action, the employer’s attitude changed. Less than 24 hours before the strike vote, an un-scheduled meeting was called by the employer during working hours. At this meeting, each employee was handed an envelope marked “confidential.” The envelope contained a letter advising the employee that his salary had been increased by a specified amount, that the increase was retroactive to February 1st, and that the money was already deposited in the employee’s bank account. At this meeting, the employer suggested that because of his generosity a strike vote would serve no useful purpose.

The employer underestimated the intelligence of his office employees. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of strike action, if a strike was necessitated.

The salaries of the office and clerical workers of MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Ltd. average $100.00 a month less per classification than those paid to OEIU members in 41 paper companies throughout Canada. This company, therefore, has been enjoying an unfair competitive advantage for many years. In addition, while the employer has a union agreement with every other union with which he has a collective bargaining unit, he has consistently refused to grant union security to the OEIU.

The OEIU has publicly stated that it is:

1. Prepared to accept the same union security provisions which the OEIU has with any other employer in the paper industry in British Columbia.

2. Prepared to accept the same union security provisions that the OEIU has with any other employer in British Columbia.

3. Prepared to accept the same union security provisions that the MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River company has with any other union.

In the position of the Office Employees International—which leaves the company many alternatives—MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Ltd. continues to try to destroy white collar unionism in Canada.
He Misses the Point

In a recent speech, Governor Scranton of Pennsylvania, one of the aspirants for the nomination for President, proposed a five-point program to meet the problems of automation.

He asked for the removal of restrictions on automation so that this nation could turn out all the goods our economy can produce. He encouraged labor and management to accept the full responsibility for solving the short-range problems of automation. He asked for a massive program of job retraining. He also called for the gearing of education to meet the needs of the new economy and the new society to provide more funds through "altered" federal tax disbursements. He also asked that a state and national clearing house be established to match available workers with available jobs.

While we appreciate Governor Scranton's interest in automation, we cannot but feel that he completely missed the point by maintaining that our economy will remain strong if we turn out all the goods that can be possibly produced. There is more to our economy than production. The real bulk of a viable economy is utilization of the goods, which comes from the potential buying power of the consumer. What does it profit a manufacturer, therefore, to have a warehouse of products if he cannot sell them?

It is true that where people are utilized to produce goods, the money they receive in wages and salaries will be utilized to purchase goods and services. Our economy rolls along when most people are working and have plenty of money to create a demand for the goods and services of industry.

The reverse is true in recessions and depressions. When people are out of work, they do not have the money to buy the goods available. Heavy inventories and full warehouses are not guarantees of prosperity. They are generally the result of slackening purchasing power.

Actually, what Governor Scranton misses is the fact that automation is the great destroyer of jobs. The sole reason for the existence of automation equipment is to replace a man or many men at less cost. If one machine replaces one man, or a handful of men, as Governor Scranton apparently still believes is the case in this present day and age, there isn't too much of a problem. But, the new technology is designed so that one machine or a complex of machines will and do replace hundreds of thousands of men and jobs elsewhere.

This is the real problem. The new automotive equipment is created and designed to irrevocably reduce the work force to an absolute minimum. Without taking into consideration the creation of new jobs which will produce occupations not presently known, it is estimated by experts that 10 per cent of the work force will be turning out the goods and services we presently use within 25 years.

In our own field, typists, file clerks and other routine clerical workers are being replaced by machines every day. Fifty thousand telephone operators have been eliminated in the American Telephone and Telegraph Company in the past 10 years. Machines now do accounting, payroll, billing, disbursements and other clerical functions with a minimum of machine operators. Computers of the future will eliminate most clerical jobs.

We are not facing a short-range problem. We are facing the possibility of being automated out of existence.

Business cannot learn to handle automation on a unilateral basis. For that matter, neither can labor. The job is too big for either or both of them.

Automation must be regulated by the government.

The Executive Board of the Office Employees International Union, at its recent meeting, recorded itself in favor of the creation of a National Automation Commission. President Johnson recently recommended the establishment of such a body. This Commission, however, must be given broad powers which include the regulation of the introduction of automotive equipment which displaces manpower. The Commission will have to give serious study to the social and economic implications of automation as it applies to the loss of consumer purchasing power as unemployment increases.

The Board stated that our government regulates the sale of securities, acts to prevent monopolies, licenses patents and assumes numerous regulatory powers. Its states have full control over the pricing of rural electric and telephone services.

It is, therefore, logical that the maintenance of consumer purchasing power is of far greater importance.

Local 153 settles with French Line after a Two-Week Strike

A two-week strike against the French Line by members of OEIU Local 153, New York City, was terminated with the signing of a three-year agreement.

The new contract provides for a 4 per cent increase retroactive to April 1st of 1964, 3 per cent on April 1, 1965, and an additional 3 per cent on April 1, 1966. During the term of the agreement, all present employees have been given a guaranteed raise of $1.50.

Additional improvements in fringe benefits will include dental care for all employees of the French Line who are members of Local 153. Vacations benefits, pay award for 18 days after eight years of employment, 20 days after 10 years, and 22 days after 15 years. Members of Local 153 will be entitled to a free trip on French Line vessels once every two years, instead of the prior plan which called for free trips after each three-year period. Libelistles of cruise trips for employees also was obtained.

The rate for 110 OEU members presently employed by the French Line will now reach a maximum rate of $196.07 per week. The contract also includes annual automatic increases within rate ranges for each classification.

During the course of the strike at the French Line, it was necessary for the union to picket all French Line piers in New York City and to dispatch pickets to Baltimore and Norfolk when the company diverted ships to those ports. John Kelly, business representative, directed the negotiations for Local 153.

Local 32 Wins N. J. Blue Cross Contract Dispute

Arbitrator Monroe Berkowitz of the New Jersey State Board of Mediation has ruled that the Hospital Service Plan of New Jersey (Blue Cross) violated its agreement with OEIU Local 32 when it substituted premium collection and deposit work to banking services.

The banking services known as the "Locked Box Procedure" permitted subscribers to make their payments to a post office box number. One of three banks, each operating under the procedure for a four-month period, picked up the mail, sorts payments with no disbursements, and deposits the payments in the Blue Cross account.

The employer maintained that it had met the requirements of the contract's subcontracting provision as it gave the required notice, minimized employee impact, and had legitimate "economic justification."

Local 32 disputed Hospital Service Plan's interpretation of economic necessity, stating that subcontracting was permissible only if the Plan ran into serious operating problems and if there was "a loss factor" in the operation itself.

Ruling in favor of Local 32, Arbitrator Berkowitz stated: "An economically necessary move requires some reasonable necessity for making the move, some justification which is more than merely economic but less than that which would prevent subcontracting except if the company were on the verge of economic catastrophe."